



## CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK

1707 ST. JOHNS AVENUE  
HIGHLAND PARK, ILLINOIS 60035 • (847) 432-0800

MICHAEL D. BELSKY  
MAYOR

November 5, 2009

Miss Sarah Gandelman's Third Grade Class  
Lincoln Elementary School  
711 Lincoln Avenue West  
Highland Park, IL 60035

Dear Students and Miss Gandelman,

Thank you all for taking the time to write and I hope you enjoyed your lessons on government.

I spoke with Caroline Field over the weekend and I am sending 2 certificates for Mayor for the Day and a golf foursome at the Highland Park Country Club for your Pancake Day Silent Auction.

With regard to some of the other items you brought to my attention, I would like you to know:

- a. Every Summer the City of Highland Park sponsor a summer concert series. These concerts take place in Port Clinton Square on Thursday evenings, beginning in the middle of June and extending through the middle of September. These concerts are advertised in our Summer Events Brochure that arrives with the June issue of the City's monthly newsletter, the *Highlander*.
- b. With regard to our citizens being obedient to our traffic laws and making the streets unsafe for neighborhood children playing, the Police Officers in Highland Park are committed to the pursuit of the highest level of traffic safety within the community. They take traffic safety very seriously while patrolling our streets and issue traffic citations to individuals who are speeding and driving in an unsafe manner. I also want you to know that citizen input is an important part of this safety philosophy and you and your parents can help. Your parents can call 847-432-7730 to report unsafe drivers or a report can be made through the City's website [www.cityhpil.com/police/ps\\_traffic\\_education-form.html](http://www.cityhpil.com/police/ps_traffic_education-form.html). The information furnished will be reviewed by traffic specialists and the registered owner of the identified vehicle contacted, seeking voluntary compliance with existing traffic laws. So even you can help make the streets more safe.
- c. With regard to our citizens' health, I have organized a Healthy Highland Park Committee which meets monthly and discusses ways for our citizens to become aware of healthy lifestyles. This past year the committee introduced and I participated in the "Winners Lose" weight loss challenge. The individuals who participated learned about healthy



eating, weight loss and exercise programs that helped all who participated to become a little more healthy.

- d. The City Council just passed a new law regarding pets. The law includes restrictions and regulations with regard to barking dogs and owners who do not remove the pet's waste, among other things. Your suggestion about placing dog waste bags in locations where owners could obtain them is a great one. I will talk to the Park District about possibly placing these in the parks, where lots of dogs are taken to play.
- e. The City is concerned about the environment and has implemented many green initiatives such as:
  - **Tree Protection and Preservation:** In 1973, the City Council approved one of the state's most comprehensive tree preservation programs that served to protect trees on private property. The ordinance created a category of protected trees, which could not be removed during construction without providing a replacement. Additionally, the ordinance required the protection of existing trees with fencing during construction.
  - **Residential Recycling Program:** In 1990, the City implemented its first residential recycling program. In 1997, the City of Highland Park became the first community in Lake County to offer a volume-based collection program that provides a financial incentive for residents to reduce their refuse production in lieu of increasing their recycling output.
  - **Tree Preservation Award:** In 1996, the Environmental Commission established the Tree Preservation Award to recognize residents and their contractors/architects who showed creativity and care in protecting trees on private property during construction.
  - **Tree Replacement Program:** In 2000, a microburst hit the City of Highland Park and caused severe property damage. In response to this incident, the City established a program for residents to purchase replacement trees at cost and assisted the Park District with promotion of its "Replant, Restore, Reforest Program" by planting trees in the City's parks.
  - **Highland Park Environmental Policy:** In 2002, a comprehensive environmental policy was adopted by the City Council to promote sustainability and enable the City to incorporate sustainable practices into the local government.
  - **Sewer Public Improvements Consortium:** In 2004, the City of Highland Park, the City of Highwood, the Village of Lake Bluff and the City of Lake Forest joined together to create the Sewer Public Improvements Consortium to address public health issues and improve the quality of life for residents. The Consortium used \$850,000 of federal funding during two fiscal years to facilitate \$1.5 million worth of improvements for Consortium communities, which includes lining, cleaning, and repairing sewers. Throughout the four participating communities, there was a

reduction of stormwater infiltration and sanitary back-ups into private property.

- **City Hybrid Vehicle Fleet:** In 2005, the City replaced Crown Victoria vehicles used for administrative and logistical support with the Toyota Prius, a hybrid vehicle that utilizes improved aerodynamics and batteries to achieve more miles to the gallon. Through the utilization of hybrid vehicles, the City consumes 3,300 less gallons of fuel each year, which equated to a savings of \$10,000 in gasoline during fiscal year 2008 and is responsible for a reduction of 29.27 metric tons in carbon dioxide emissions by the City.
- **Recycling of City Equipment:** Prior to 2008, the City of Highland Park initiated a program that recycles used batteries, motor oil, oil filters, and anti-freeze along with worn tires from City equipment and vehicles.
- **Air-Conditioning:** Prior to 2008, the City replaced R-22 gas with puron gas in air-conditioning units to limit ozone depletion.
- **Highland Park Green Initiatives Alliance:** The Highland Park Green Initiatives Alliance was formed as a collaboration of the six governmental agencies within the geographic borders of the City of Highland Park, Illinois, that have committed to working collectively to accomplish environmentally-sustainable goals. The members of the Green Initiatives Alliance include the City, the Park District of Highland Park, the City's elementary and high school districts, the Highland Park Library, Moraine Township, the business community, and members of the community who are interested in green initiatives. The Green Initiatives Alliance is responsible for creating and implementing sustainability programs that include: creation of multiple public demonstration rain gardens; establishment of twice-weekly electronics recycling program; promotion of residential rain gardens and rain barrels; creation of a bio-diesel lab at the Highland Park High School; utilization of a brine solution to reduce road salt usage; and, compact fluorescent light bulb distribution to public housing facilities and City residents. Additionally, the Green Initiatives Alliance is responsible for the development of a Sustainable Community Master Plan, which will help guide future sustainability programs in the City of Highland Park. While the Highland Park Green Initiatives Alliance began implementation in 2007, it continues to provide guidance for sustainability programs in the City.
- **Demonstration Rain Garden:** In 2008, the City of Highland Park implemented a demonstration rain garden. The purpose of the rain garden is to reduce stormwater runoff through the use of vegetation to collect water that would otherwise flow to storm sewers and streams. Further, rain gardens help mitigate flooding and stream bank erosion.
- **Brine Production System:** In response to increased road salt prices in 2008, the City of Highland Park purchased a brine production system that mixes road salt with water or beet juice to create a brine solution. The use of a brine solution is sustainable

because it utilizes less road salt and stays on the roadway without bouncing onto the public right-of-way, which may cause property damage to lawn and trees.

- **Electronics Recycling Program:** The City of Highland Park partnered with the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County (SWALCO) to create an electronics recycling program that allows Lake County residents to dispose of electronic equipment through environmentally-friendly practices. In 2008, over 2,700 Lake County residents utilized the Highland Park electronics recycling program, which makes the City's site one of the most utilized facilities for electronics recycling in Lake County.
- **Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) Bulb Distribution:** In 2008, the City of Highland Park received over 7,000 CFL bulbs from the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus for distribution to residents. Approximately 2,700 of the bulbs were distributed to affordable housing units throughout Highland Park and the remainder of the CFL bulbs were made available to residents for free on May 1, 2008.
- **Commercial and Multi-Family Waste and Recycling Franchise:** The City implemented a commercial and multi-family waste and recycling franchise agreement on January 1, 2009. A commercial and multi-family waste and recycling franchise licenses a single company to haul all recycling and waste for the City's businesses and multi-family units. Since its implementation, the recycling rate of program participants has increased from 20% prior to implementation to 39% after three months of service. Once full implementation of the program is complete on January 1, 2010, it is anticipated that the City of Highland Park will be completely serviced by trucks powered by compressed natural gas, which utilizes 90% fewer pollutants than traditional waste servicing vehicles that use diesel fuel.
- **Promotion of Recycling at Special Events:** The City of Highland Park provides recycling at all special events. Most recently, the City provided recycling for the Taste of Highland Park, which attracted 275,000 people into the downtown business district during a three-day period. This allowed the City to incorporate recycling while promoting sustainable practices to a broad audience.
- **Sustainable Design Affordable Housing Development:** The City of Highland Park collaborated with local, state, and private partners to build a 14-unit townhouse affordable housing development designed to appeal to those who are unable to afford housing in Highland Park. The development, 500 Hyacinth Place, uses geothermal heating and cooling, wind energy, efficient appliances, and sustainable design to help minimize energy usage for fourteen residences. The development project was recognized by the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission in 2008 as the development of the year based on the incorporation of comprehensive management practices that promote conservation, environmental awareness, and preservation.
- **Sustainable Community Master Plan:** The Sustainable Community Master Plan was initiated by the Highland Park Green Initiatives Alliance to identify and evaluate the existing sustainability programs within the City. Another objective of the

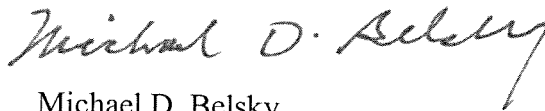
Sustainable Community Master Plan will be the establishment of performance targets and timeframes for the goals of the Highland Park Green Initiatives Alliance. The ultimate function of the Master Plan will be the identification of deficits in the current sustainability strategy and provide recommendations to improve the program while proposing new green initiatives for the City to engage.

With regard to the above green initiatives, On October 14, 2009, the City of Highland Park received the 2009 Irwin A. Bock Award for Excellence in Public Administration – Community Environmental Stewardship from the Northwest Municipal Conference (NWMC). The Bock Award is presented to communities that reduce their impact on the environment and promote sustainable practices for their residents.

I hope the above information answers the majority of your questions in your letters. Thank you for your interest in the City of Highland Park. I have enclosed city coins for each of you. The inscription on the coin reads, "The Salvation of the Community is the Watchfulness of the Citizen" which is just what you have done by bringing things to my attention. Please continue to be watchful citizens and Miss Gandelman, if you would like me to stop by the class to meet you and your students, please call my assistant, DeVona Gaynor at 847-926-1008 to get this added to my schedule.

Thank you again to all of you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael D. Belsky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" being the most prominent part.

Michael D. Belsky  
Mayor

MDB:dkg

Enclosures – City Coins